

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 6: Lesson 7 Students engaged with Chapter 2 of the text, *The Wall*, and collected evidence about the events and characters. They will use their graphic organizers to write a summary of Chapter 2.

The Wall (Chapter 2)

August 13, 1961

East Berlin

Early Morning

“Nein!”

A muffled shout awakened Franz. Confused, he sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. He peered at the door as his vision came into focus. Was his mother shouting? Where was she? Was he late for school again?

Despite the flurry of questions in his head, Franz wondered if he had, for the first time he could remember, woken up early. While he could hardly believe that was plausible, he reached over to his nightstand to look at his watch. Sunlight reflecting off his wrist told him he had forgotten to take it off before he went to bed. 7:06 A.M.! Forget early—I’m even later than usual!

Franz shot out of bed and hurriedly grabbed his jacket, which he had slung over a chair the night before. He nearly put his sweater on backward in the rush to get ready. In less than a minute, he was pulling open his bedroom door and bolting toward the kitchen.

When he saw his mother, cheeks flushed and wet with tears, sobbing quietly at the table, Franz skidded to a halt. His grandmother had one arm around his mother and was gently rubbing her back. At the end of the table, his grandfather sat motionless, his clenched fists resting on the table.

Franz could feel his voice catch in his throat, fearing the answers to all of the questions that danced around in his head. After what felt like an eternity of anxious waiting, he could manage nothing more than a single, raspy word to announce his presence.

“Mutter?”

The sudden breaking of silence startled his mother and grandparents, and their heads shot up as if they had all been wakened from a dream. Franz’s mother was able to look at her son for only a few moments before she started to sob inconsolably once more. His grandmother simply shook her head and returned her attention to Franz’s mother.

“It’s Sunday—no school today, Franz,” said his grandfather gravely. Franz saw that the knuckles of his still-clenched fists were now white. “Something has happened.”

Franz’s heart began to race. What could have happened? Why was his mother crying?

“Too many people have been leaving East Berlin lately,” explained his grandfather, staring ahead angrily. “The government doesn’t like that—the fewer people there are in East Berlin, the less money the government makes. So last night, they finally decided to do something to keep people from leaving.”

Franz's grandfather finally looked at his grandson and saw the confusion in his eyes. "They built a wall, Franz. Now no one can leave East Berlin." He sighed heavily before adding, ". . . or enter from West Berlin."

Franz felt like he had been punched in the stomach.

"B-but . . . Father?—"

"Still in West Berlin," his grandfather said through clenched jaws. He sounded angry, and understandably so—Franz's father was his son. "Our section of the city was one of the first places they put up the initial barrier. Even though it was just barbed wire and cement posts, no one knows how they managed to build it that quickly . . . and now they're making it even bigger. It's already a solid cement block wall for miles in either direction."

When his grandfather saw Franz tense with fear, his eyes softened. "listen, Franz, there is nothing we can do right now. Go outside and play with your friends. Just stay away from that wall."

What else could Franz do but nod? He glanced at his mother once more before leaving the apartment.

When Franz stepped outside, he saw Roland sitting on the curb in front of the building, staring intently down the street. Franz followed the direction of his friend's gaze and saw in the distance the newly erected wall, made of barbed wire and concrete blocks. The sound of the door closing snapped Roland out of his daze, and he turned around.

"Can you believe this?" Roland stood up and shook his head in disbelief.

"It doesn't feel real," said Franz incredulously. How many people must it have taken to put this barricade up in the middle of the night? He just couldn't understand. "Is it even legal for the government to do this?"

"Beats me. I asked my parents the same thing. They said it doesn't matter because the government makes the laws, and they get to decide what's legal."

"True," said Franz with a thoughtful nod. But his brow furrowed when something Roland had just said sunk in. "You said you talked to your parents? How did your dad get back home last night?"

"Huh? Oh, he got home pretty late. He must've gotten back right before they started building the wall." Suddenly, the look on Roland's face shifted from frustrated to sympathetic. Their fathers worked at the same factory.

"Oh no! Did your father stay in West Berlin last night, Franz?"

Franz swallowed hard and started to walk down the street in the direction of the wall. He had to see it for himself.

"Franz!" Roland protested. "We're not supposed to get close to the wall." But Franz dismissed the warning with a wave of his hand. He was determined. "I have to see it."

It wasn't a long walk to the wall, but as intent as Franz was, he had to stop a few blocks before it. He could see it better now—the street that had previously gone to West Berlin had been dug up. Instead of smooth pavement, concrete posts had been drilled deep into the ground. Between them, concrete

blocks topped with rows of barbed wire created a solid barrier. Franz looked left and right—and realized that West Berlin was completely walled off. The city was physically divided. And that wasn't all. Uniformed soldiers wielding rifles patrolled the wall's perimeter. Franz could hear Roland, now close behind him, gasp in shock. They stood speechless for what seemed like hours before Roland eventually broke the silence.

"I don't think I'll be leaving East Berlin anytime soon."

Franz couldn't give Roland's thwarted move much thought. He was too busy staring at the wall. He sat down against a nearby building and was so hypnotized by the patrol of the officers walking back and forth that Roland finally went home on his own.

By that afternoon, Franz had noticed that the guards passed a section of the wall at irregular intervals. Sometimes, two guards would meet, about-face, and then walk back in the direction from which they had each come. Other times, only a single guard would pass by the turnaround point.

However, instead of stopping and heading back in the same direction, he would continue walking. Franz glanced down at his watch every time he saw a guard.

Three minutes, he murmured to himself.

"You shouldn't be this close to the wall, Franz," cautioned a voice. Franz looked up and saw a somewhat familiar face. It was Karl. But Franz's normally laid-back and jovial friend was almost unrecognizable with a rifle gripped in his hands and a stern look on his face.

"I had to see it," said Franz. "My dad worked late last night . . . he's still in West Berlin."

Karl frowned. "I'm sorry, Franz. If I had any information on whether they'll allow people to come back, I'd tell you."

"Thanks, Karl," replied Franz somberly. But he perked up suddenly. "Hey, wait. Do you think you could get a message to my father?"

The soldier looked hesitant, but seeing the hopeful look on Franz's face caused him to relent. He dug a piece of paper and a pencil out of his pocket and handed them to Franz. "I'll see what I can do. No promises, though—they're really keeping the border secure."

Excited by an idea, Franz scribbled a quick note to his father. He had to tell him about the poorly guarded section of the wall. When he was finished writing, he carefully folded the note, handed it back to Karl, and said, "Vielen herzlichen Dank!"

Karl smiled and nodded. "You should get back home now. It's not a good time to be wandering the streets."

As Franz walked back to his apartment building, he was in high spirits. He had faith in his friend Karl.

Independent work:

To capture your thoughts from Chapter 2, write a summary of the events using the notes on your chart. Remember to include the important detail that now there is a wall in the city that wasn't there the day before! Also, write about the changes in the characters that we read about in Chapter 2 as a result of the new wall.

Once you have written your paragraphs, go back and check for correct punctuation and capitalization. Make sure each sentence expresses a complete thought. Add transition words to help a reader follow the flow of your ideas. Transitions could include words like first, next, then, also, while, and finally. I know you'll do a great job! You have notes on both of your charts that will help you decide what to write.